



Department of Justice

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Middle District of Florida

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ANTI-GANG INITIATIVE IN TAMPA/HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION AND AWARD

Tampa, Florida - U.S. Attorney A. Brian Albritton announces that the Department of Justice today presented a National Achievement Award to the Tampa/Hillsborough Comprehensive Anti-Gang Initiative (CAGI) Task Force at the Department annual Project Safe Neighborhoods(PSN) national conference in New Orleans. U.S. Attorneys' Offices across the nation submitted nominees, The Tampa/Hillsborough CAGI Task Force was selected from among all nominees for the **Outstanding Overall Partnership/Task Force Award**.

U.S. Attorney Albritton stated, "I want to congratulate the hard working law enforcement agencies that make up the CAGI Task Force. They have demonstrated the power of partnership which has resulted in positive solutions to the Gang problem in the Tampa Bay Area."

The award was based on the following information submitted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District of Florida:

The MDFL CAGI is the hallmark for Florida's Anti-Gang efforts. Prevention/intervention, enforcement/prosecution, and re-entry weave a seamless, powerful strategy. Florida Attorney General Bill McCollum has adapted our CAGI model for Florida's Regional Gang Reduction Task Forces that follow our CAGI template.

The teamwork, partnerships, and communication of our CAGI have created a sustainable community onslaught against violent gang activity. We are successfully reducing the crime rate while increasing awareness, identifying at-risk children, enhancing re-entry services, and promoting prevention. We are partnering with the newly funded Tampa Weed & Seed.

An on-site BJA evaluation team studying Best Practices in Reducing Violent Crime, noted that Tampa has less per-capita violent crime than other comparable-size cities because of our highly effective CAGI partnerships.

Expanding our communication and alliance with community/neighborhood leaders has helped reduce crime and improve quality of life. The Tampa area has far exceeded the 4.7% national average of reducing crime for the 6th consecutive year, down 46% from 2003-2008.

While conducting a study for innovative solutions involving intelligence-based policing, BJA sent a second on-site assessment team to study our philosophy of enforcement.

Primary local partners in this 26-agency initiative within Hillsborough County include the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, Tampa PD, juvenile/adult probation, jails, Criminal Justice Office, foundations, businesses, and FBOs/CBOs; state partners include FLDC, FDLE, and FHP. Because our gangs are so mobile, we have expanded the task force (TF) to include investigators/analysts from our surrounding counties. Federal agencies include ATF, DHS/ICE, FBI, DEA, USMS, and BOP. There is a full-house each month at our TF meetings, sharing intelligence and enhancing our comprehensive strategy. THE TURF REPORT and other area gang newsletters developed by our analysts assure intelligence reaches all LEOs in the 5-county area.

Our TF focuses on controlling existing criminal gangs while disrupting their capacity to engage in criminal activities, preventing the expansion of gang culture, and assessing nuisance complaints which are gang-related. Joint-operational teams attend major events (concerts, festivals, parades), combing the crowd for gangs, as this provides a superiority of manpower to control these mass assembly events and serves as a visible deterrent to prevent predatory crimes.

HC's Code Enforcement Law Enforcement Liaison Team focuses on graffiti abatement and code violations in hot-spot areas due to neglect and waning property conditions, and in areas surrounding schools, playgrounds and other places children congregate, to prevent gang activities and create a safer environment.

